

VERTIGO

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WILLINGHAM

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LEIALOHA




no. 25

SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS [vertigo.comics.com](http://vertigo.comics.com)



WE'RE  
ON OUR WAY,  
SNOW.



WE'VE  
SCROUNGED  
UP EVERY PIECE  
OF ROLLING EQUIP-  
MENT WE COULD BEG,  
BORROW OR *STEAL*,  
AND STUFFED THEM  
FULL OF FARM FABLES  
AND GUNS--LOTS  
OF GUNS.



TONS  
OF GUNS.



AND NOW WE'RE  
HAULING ASS TO THE CITY--  
SO HOLD ON, 'CAUSE THE  
CAVALRY'S COMING.

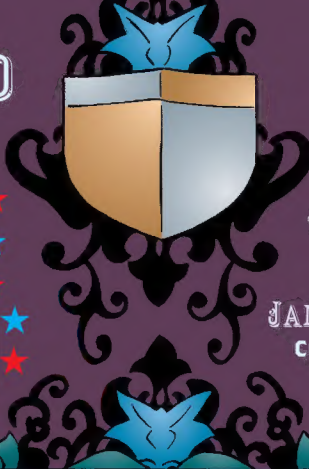
WHERE  
ARE WE?

I  
CAN'T  
SEE!

NO, BUT  
YOU'RE GOING  
TO GET US *ALL* IN  
TROUBLE IF SOME  
MUNDY DRIVER SEES  
*YOU*, SO SIT BACK  
DOWN AND COVER  
UP, STINKY!

# OUR RIGHT TO ASSEMBLE ISSUE

## CHAPTER SIX ◦ MARCH OF THE WOODEN SOLDIERS

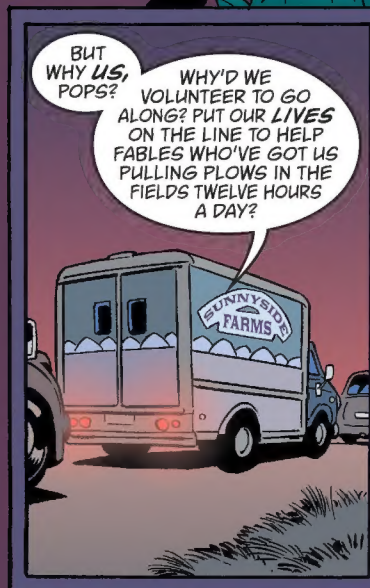
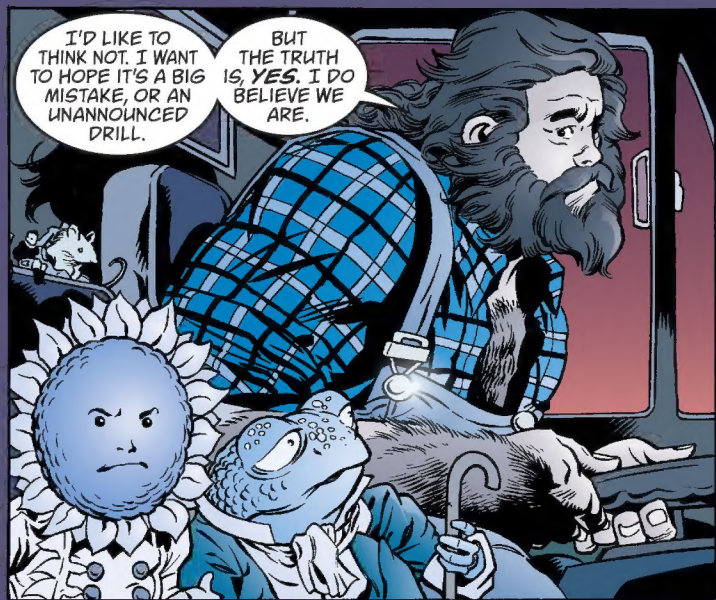
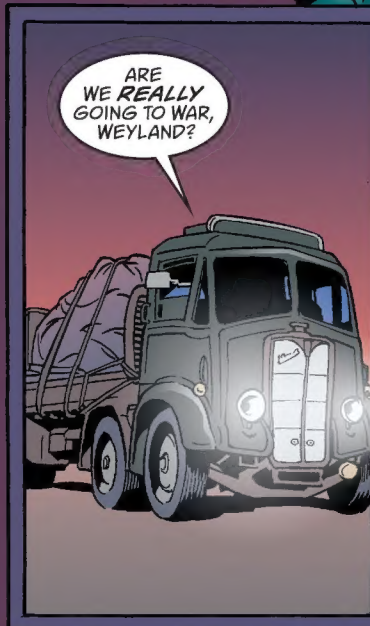


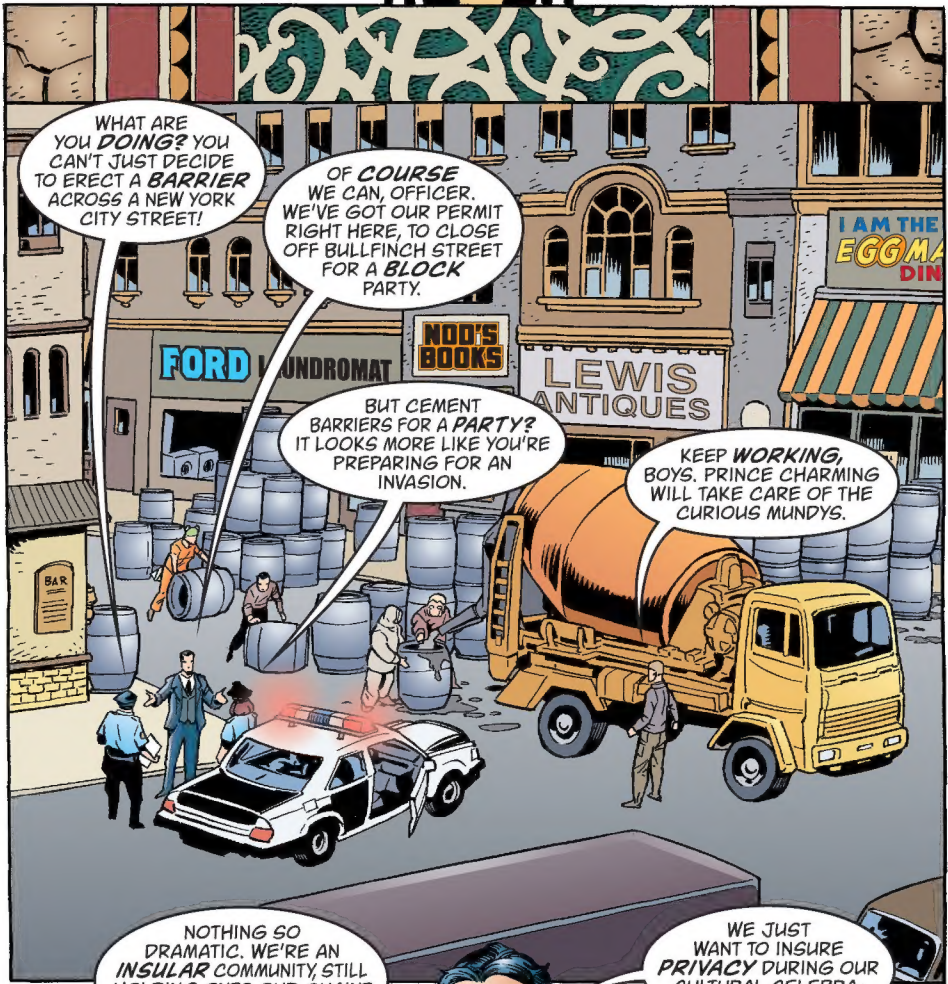
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WHAT ARE YOU *DOING*? YOU CAN'T JUST DECIDE TO ERECT A **BARRIER** ACROSS A NEW YORK CITY STREET!

OF *COURSE* WE CAN, OFFICER. WE'VE GOT OUR PERMIT RIGHT HERE, TO CLOSE OFF BULLFINCH STREET FOR A **BLOCK PARTY**.

BUT CEMENT BARRIERS FOR A *PARTY*? IT LOOKS MORE LIKE YOU'RE PREPARING FOR AN **INVASION**.

KEEP *WORKING*, BOYS. PRINCE CHARMING WILL TAKE CARE OF THE **CURIOUS MUNDYS**.

NOTHING SO **DRAMATIC**. WE'RE AN *INSULAR* COMMUNITY STILL HOLDING ONTO OUR **QUAINT** TRADITIONS FROM THE OLD COUNTRY.

WE JUST WANT TO **INSURE** *PRIVACY* DURING OUR **CULTURAL CELEBRATION**, IS ALL.



OKAY, THIS PERMIT LOOKS IN **ORDER**.

JUST MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ALL THIS **CLEARED AWAY** AGAIN, BEFORE THE DAY AFTER **TOMORROW**.

**ABSOLUTELY**, OFFICERS. AND YOU TWO TAKE *CARE* OUT THERE. WE'RE **AVID BOOSTERS** OF NEW YORK'S **FINEST**.





PROBLEM SOLVED. AND HOW GOES *YOUR* PART OF THE STRUGGLE, GENTLEMEN?

WE'RE DOING OKAY, MISTER PRINCE, SIR.

IT'S A BIT MESSY ROLLING THE BARRELS INTO POSITION BEFORE THE CEMENT'S FULLY SET, BUT...

MARVELOUS. YOU'RE DOING FINE. BY NOON WE'LL HAVE WALLS CLOSING OFF EACH END OF BULLFINCH STREET, TWO BARRELS HIGH AND AT LEAST TWO BARRELS DEEP.

WALK WITH ME, FLY.

UH... SURE.



WHO OWNS THESE CARS? ARE THEY OURS?

YES, SIR. THEY BELONG TO FABLETOWN RESIDENTS. WE HAVE SPELLS THAT KEEP THE MUNDYS FROM PARKING HERE.



GOOD. WE'LL MOVE THEM INTO A TIGHT SEMICIRCLE HERE, TO FORM AN INNER BARRIER, DEFENDING THE WOODLAND ENTRANCE.

THIS TYPE OF WARFARE'S ALL ABOUT PREPARING A SERIES OF DEFENSIBLE FALL-BACK POSITIONS NESTED WITHIN EACH OTHER.



WE'LL USE THE WALLED COURTYARD FRONTING THE WOODLAND BUILDING AS OUR FINAL REDOUBT.

THIS IS A LOT OF WORK TO DEFEND OURSELVES AGAINST THREE WOODEN GUNMEN, ISN'T IT?

THREE THAT WE KNOW OF.

BUT WHO KNOWS HOW MANY THERE TRULY ARE?





PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION, BROTHERS.



FIRST, TAKE EXTRA CARE ON OPENING EACH CRATE, SO AS NOT TO DAMAGE THE PRECIOUS CONTENTS WITHIN.



THEN EXAMINE EACH PIECE, AS YOU UNPACK IT, TO MAKE SURE IT'S PROPERLY INTACT AND FUNCTIONAL.



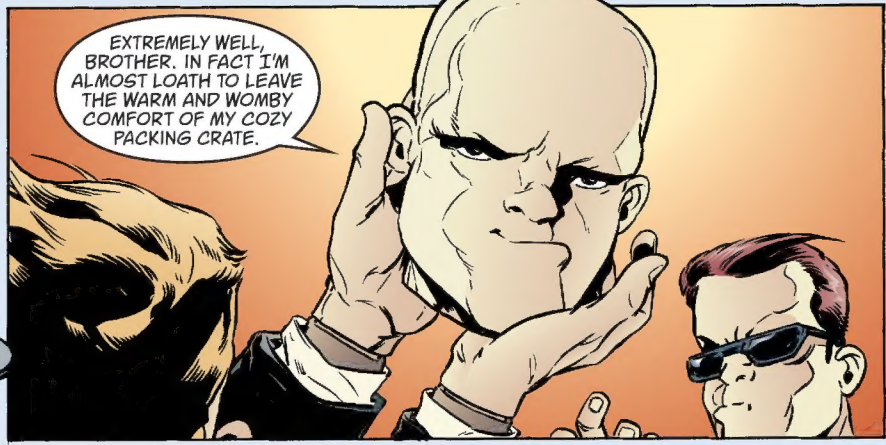
I CAUTION YOU TO BE **MOST** CAREFUL WITH THE HEAD AND HANDS--

--THE THREE PARTS CARVED BY THE CREATOR HIMSELF AND ENCHANTED TO PASS AS LIVING FLESH AMONG THE MEATHEADS.



BROTHER LOU, HOW **GRAND** TO SEE YOU AGAIN!

GREETINGS, BROTHER RANDOLPH. I TRUST YOU FARED WELL DURING THESE LONG DAYS OF TRANSIT AND STORAGE?



EXTREMELY WELL, BROTHER. IN FACT I'M ALMOST LOATH TO LEAVE THE WARM AND WOMBY COMFORT OF MY COZY PACKING CRATE.

WELL, IT'S TIME TO GO TO WORK, BROTHER RANDOLPH. LET'S GET YOU UNPACKED AND OVER TO STATION TWO, FOR ASSEMBLY.

BROTHERS: AS SOON AS YOU'RE ASSEMBLED, IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK YOURSELF FOR FULL MOBILITY.

IF SOMETHING IS TOO TIGHT, OR TOO LOOSE, GET IT FIXED HERE AND NOW, BEFORE PROCEEDING TO WARDROBE.

STATION 3

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ONE SHIRT, ONE PAIR OF PANTS, ONE SUIT-JACKET, ONE TIE, ONE PAIR OF SOCKS, ONE LEFT SHOE AND ONE RIGHT SHOE.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT SIZES. THEY'RE ALL THE SAME.

STATION 4

ONCE YOU'VE DRESSED, PROCEED TO STATION FIVE FOR YOUR HAIR. THEN GO TO STATION SIX FOR YOUR WEAPONS.

STATION 1

IF YOU HAVE A PREFERENCE IN HAIR COLOR, LET ME KNOW NOW, OR YOU'LL HAVE TO FIND SOMEONE WILLING TO TRADE WITH YOU.

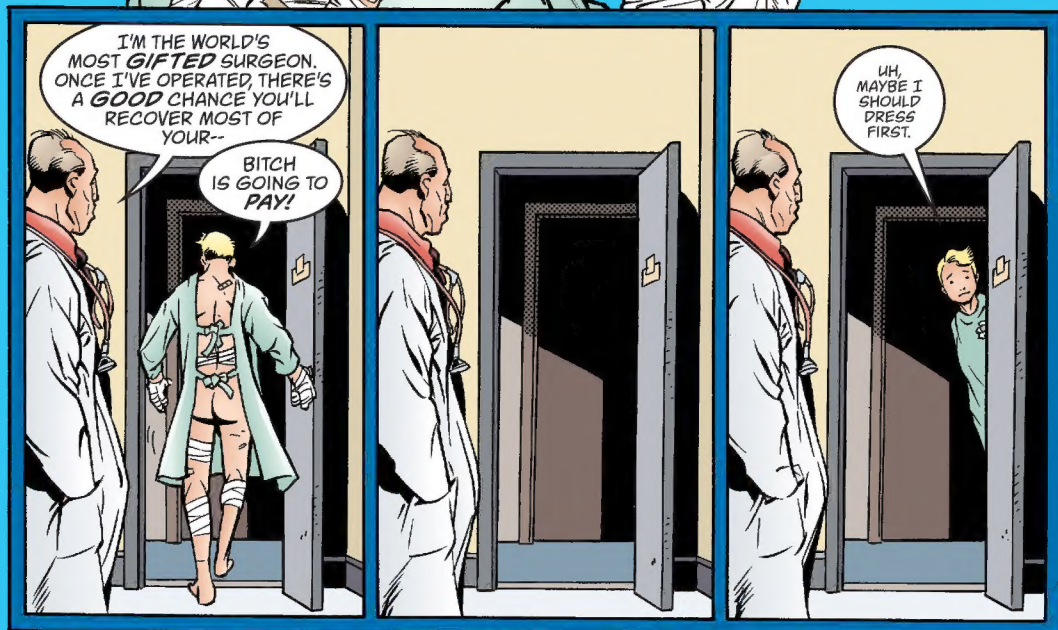
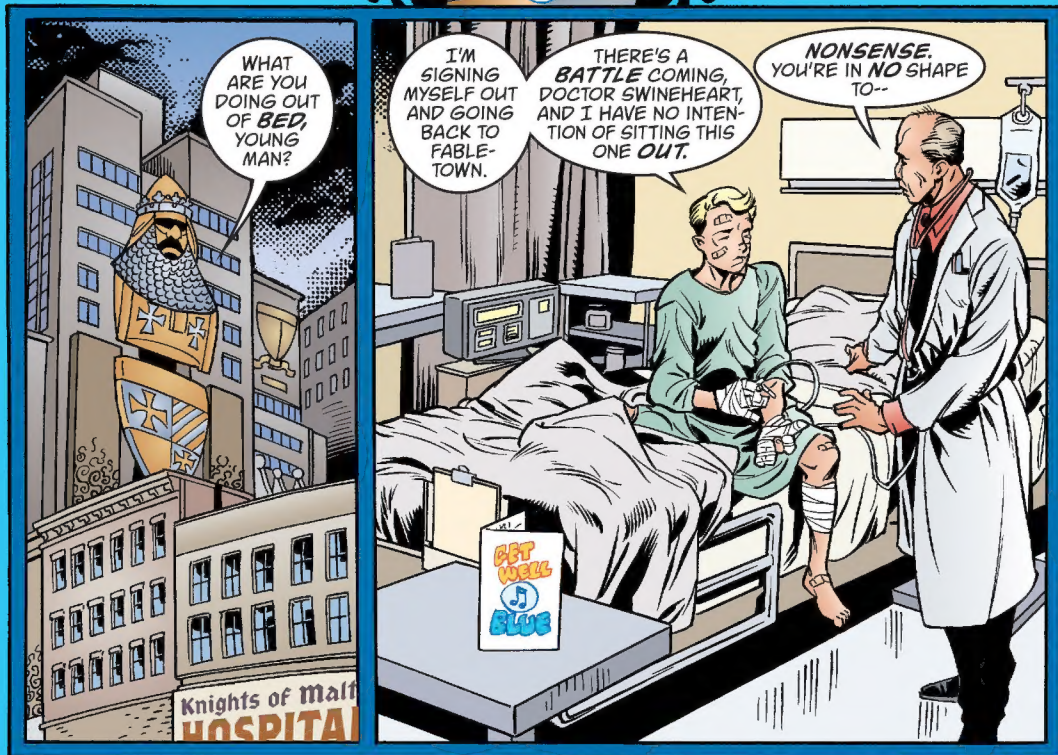
STATION 5

STATION 6

STATION 2

NOT EVERYONE GETS A GUN--THERE AREN'T ENOUGH. IF YOU AREN'T ISSUED A GUN, STAY CLOSE TO A BROTHER WHO HAS ONE. IF HE FALLS IN BATTLE, THEN CONGRATULATIONS--YOU GET A GUN.

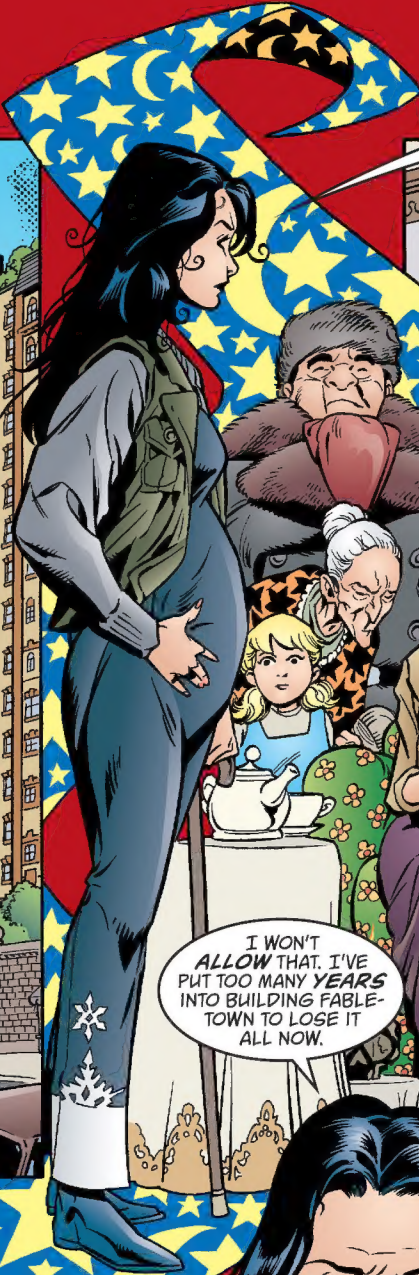
ONCE YOU'RE FULLY ASSEMBLED, DRESSED AND ARMED, PROCEED DOWNSTAIRS TO MISSION-PLANNING AND INDOCTRINATION.







I'D LOVE TO BE ABLE TO USE YOU IN THE ACTUAL FIGHTING.



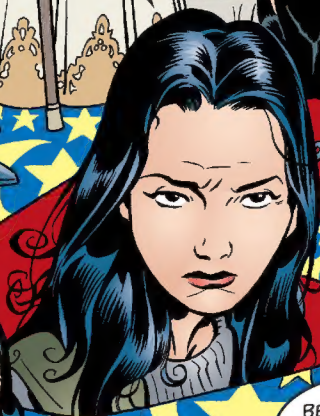
UNFORTUNATELY, YOUR CONSIDERABLE POWERS WILL BE NEEDED IN A MORE VITAL CAPACITY.

EVEN IF WE WIN THE BATTLE, WE'LL STILL LOSE EVERYTHING IF THE MUNDYS DISCOVER ANY PART OF WHAT'S ABOUT TO OCCUR.

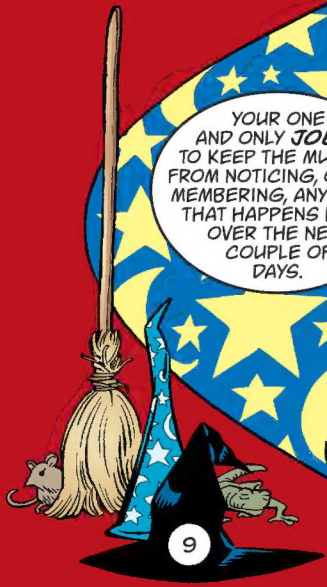
I WON'T ALLOW THAT. I'VE PUT TOO MANY YEARS INTO BUILDING FABLETOWN TO LOSE IT ALL NOW.



YOUR ONE AND ONLY JOB IS TO KEEP THE MUNDYS FROM NOTICING, OR REMEMBERING, ANYTHING THAT HAPPENS HERE OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS.

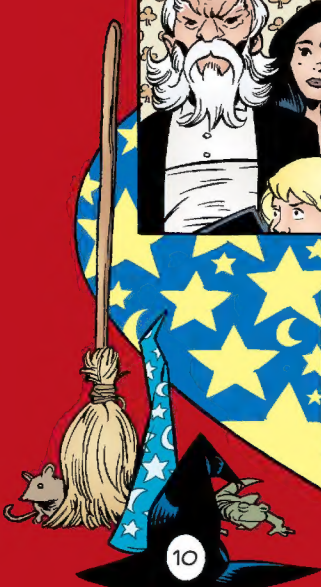
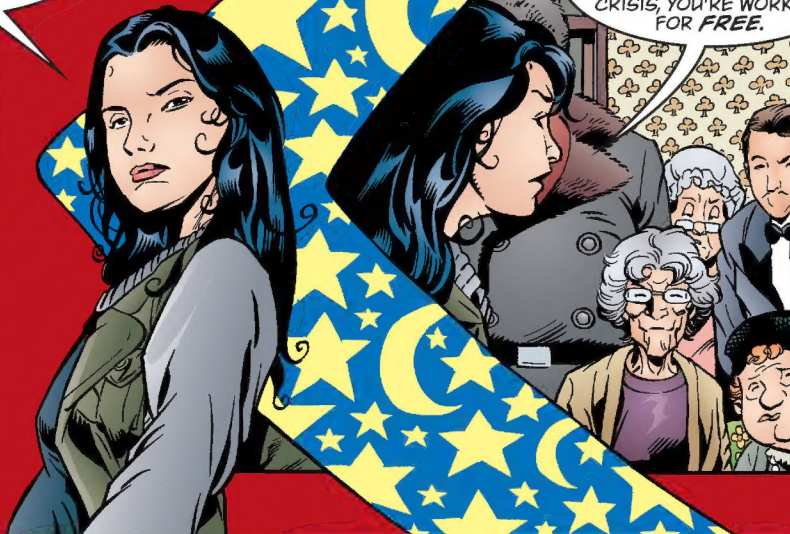


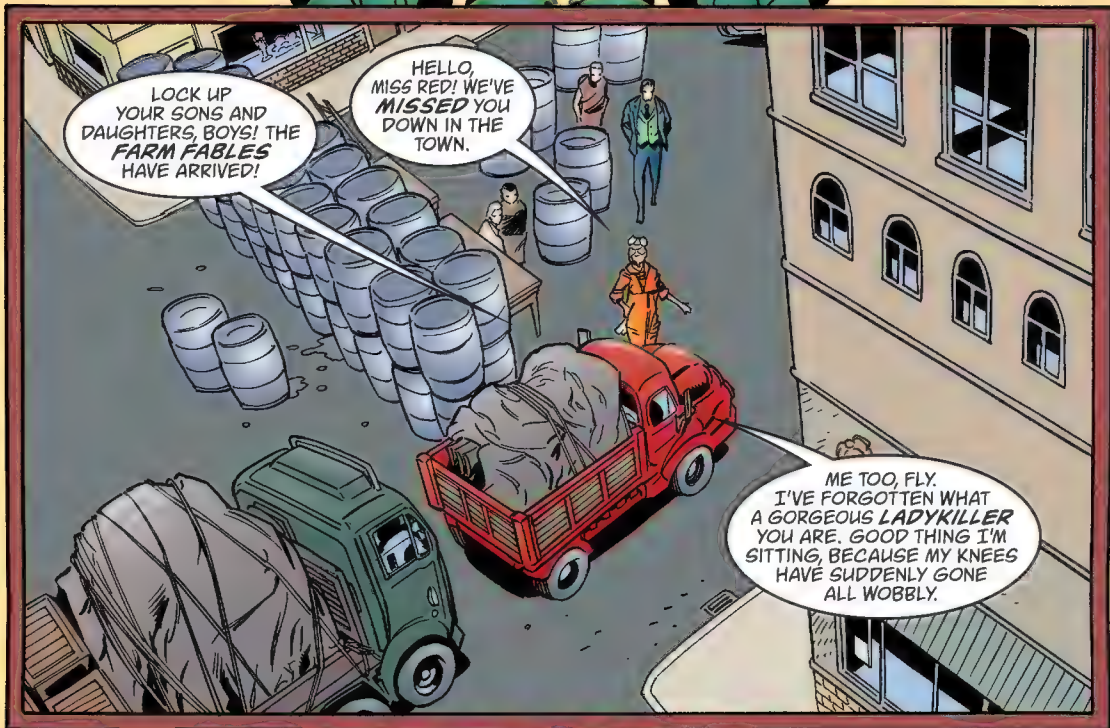
THAT'S GOING TO BE AWFULLY EXPENSIVE, MISS WHITE. CAN FABLETOWN AFFORD SO MANY COSTLY ENCHANTMENTS?



THIS IS AN OFFICIALLY DECLARED FABLETOWN EMERGENCY, AND LIKE EVERY OTHER ABLE-BODIED FABLE, YOU'VE BEEN DRAFTED TO DO YOUR PART.

GO READ YOUR COPIES OF THE FABLETOWN COMPACT. FOR THE DURATION OF THIS CRISIS, YOU'RE WORKING FOR FREE.





LOCK UP YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS, BOYS! THE FARM FABLES HAVE ARRIVED!

HELLO, MISS RED! WE'VE MISSED YOU DOWN IN THE TOWN.

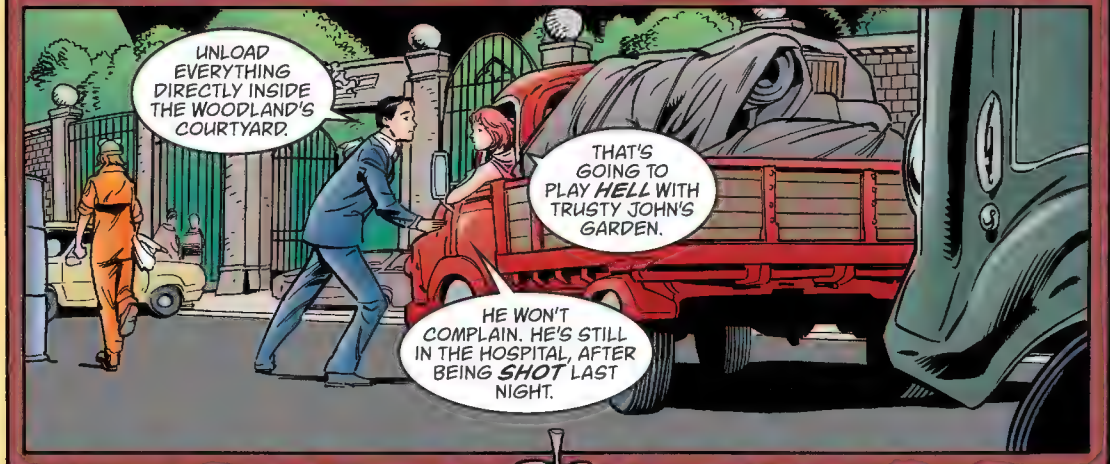
ME TOO, FLY. I'VE FORGOTTEN WHAT A GORGEOUS LADYKILLER YOU ARE. GOOD THING I'M SITTING, BECAUSE MY KNEES HAVE SUDDENLY GONE ALL WOBBLY.



SPEAKING OF LADYKILLERS, I UNDERSTAND WE'VE YOU TO THANK FOR RIDDING US OF BLUEBEARD. WELL DONE, PRINCE CHARMING.

GLAD TO DO IT. JUST REMEMBER ME COME ELECTION DAY.

SO WHERE DO YOU WANT US, COWBOY?



UNLOAD EVERYTHING DIRECTLY INSIDE THE WOODLAND'S COURTYARD.

THAT'S GOING TO PLAY HELL WITH TRUSTY JOHN'S GARDEN.

HE WON'T COMPLAIN. HE'S STILL IN THE HOSPITAL, AFTER BEING SHOT LAST NIGHT.



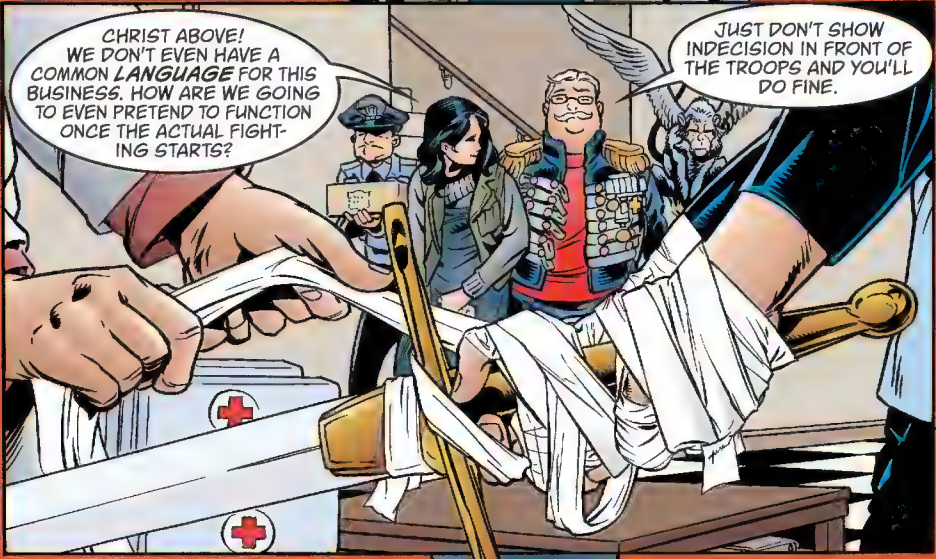
MAKE SURE EVERYONE GETS ONE OF THESE RADIOS.

EVERYONE? THERE'S NOT ENOUGH, MISS WHITE. THE LOCAL RADIO SHACK ONLY HAD TWELVE IN STOCK.

NOT EVERYONE, BUT EVERY--WHAT DO WE CALL THEM? GROUP LEADERS?

PLATOON LEADERS?

SECTION LEADERS?



CHRIST ABOVE! WE DON'T EVEN HAVE A COMMON LANGUAGE FOR THIS BUSINESS. HOW ARE WE GOING TO EVEN PRETEND TO FUNCTION ONCE THE ACTUAL FIGHTING STARTS?

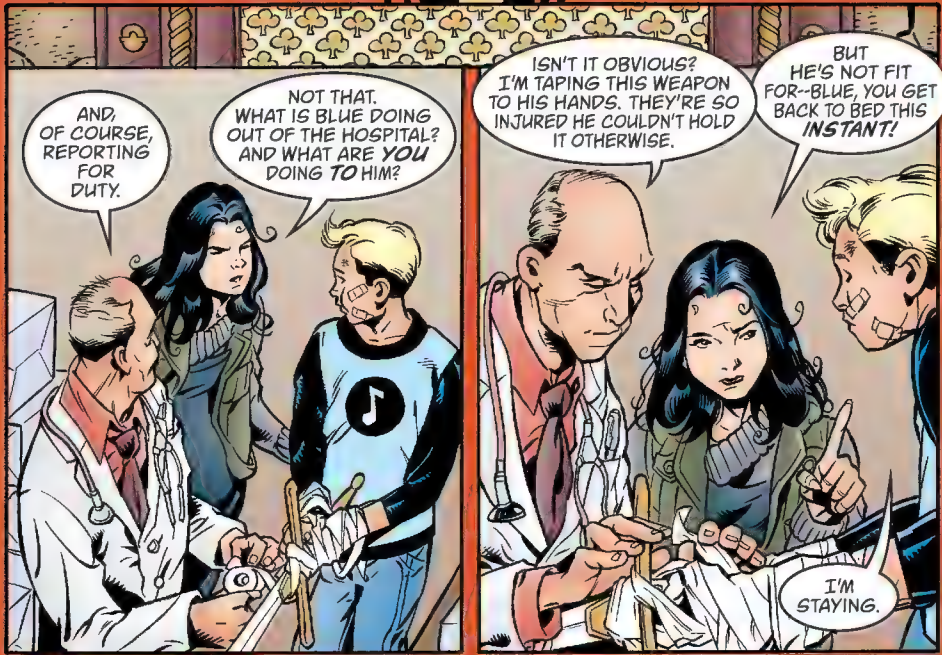
JUST DON'T SHOW INDECISION IN FRONT OF THE TROOPS AND YOU'LL DO FINE.



DOCTOR SWINEHEART? BLUE?

WHAT IN GOD'S NAME ARE YOU TWO DOING HERE?

DELIVERING MEDICAL SUPPLIES, AS ORDERED.



AND, OF COURSE, REPORTING FOR DUTY.

NOT THAT. WHAT IS BLUE DOING OUT OF THE HOSPITAL? AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO HIM?

ISN'T IT OBVIOUS? I'M TAPING THIS WEAPON TO HIS HANDS. THEY'RE SO INJURED HE COULDN'T HOLD IT OTHERWISE.

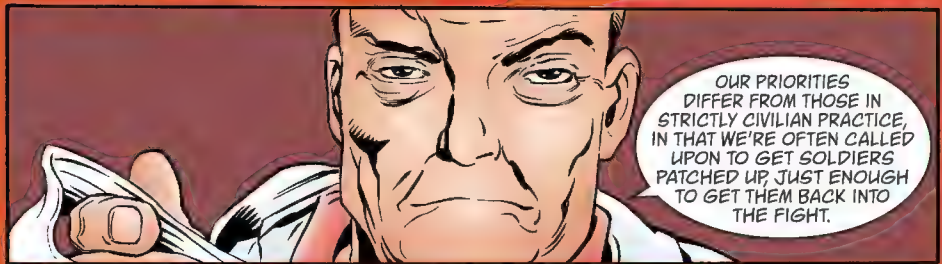
BUT HE'S NOT FIT FOR--BLUE, YOU GET BACK TO BED THIS INSTANT!

I'M STAYING.

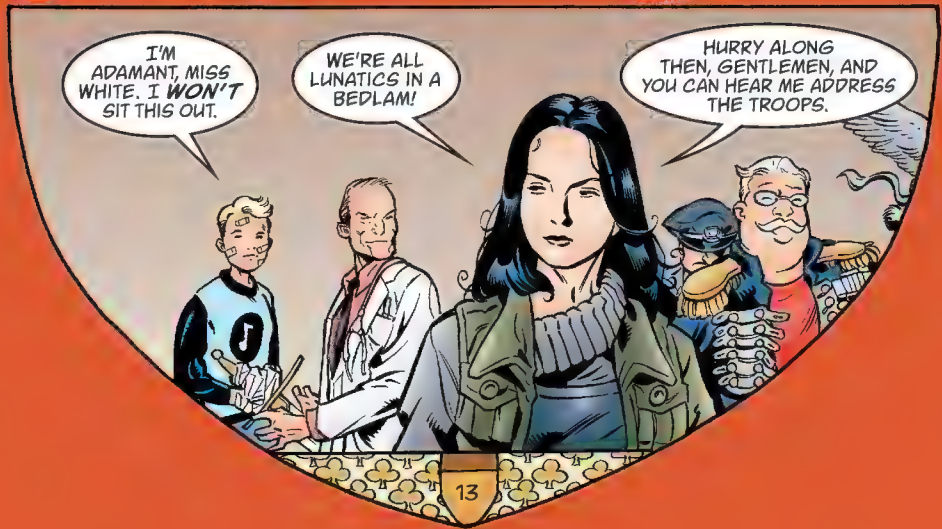


SWINEHEART, YOU'RE A DOCTOR! HOW COULD YOU BE A PARTY TO THIS NONSENSE?

BECAUSE I'M A BATTLEFIELD SURGEON--THE BEST IN THE HISTORY OF WARFARE.



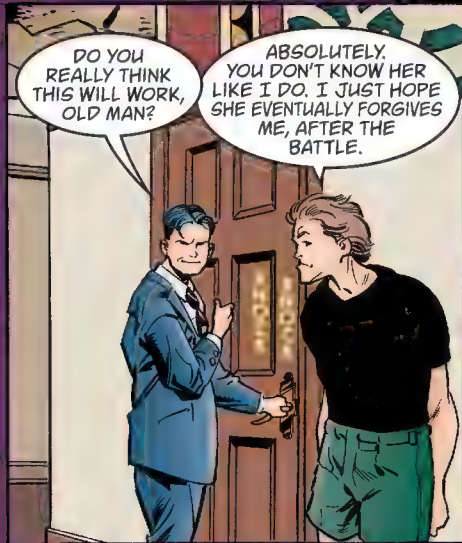
OUR PRIORITIES DIFFER FROM THOSE IN STRICTLY CIVILIAN PRACTICE, IN THAT WE'RE OFTEN CALLED UPON TO GET SOLDIERS PATCHED UP, JUST ENOUGH TO GET THEM BACK INTO THE FIGHT.



I'M ADAMANT, MISS WHITE. I WON'T SIT THIS OUT.

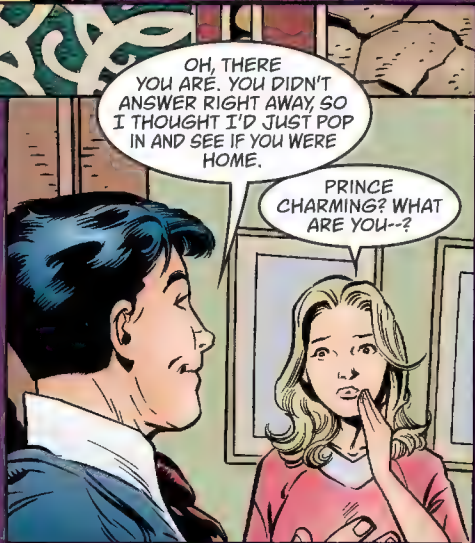
WE'RE ALL LUNATICS IN A BEDLAM!

HURRY ALONG THEN, GENTLEMEN, AND YOU CAN HEAR ME ADDRESS THE TROOPS.



DO YOU REALLY THINK THIS WILL WORK, OLD MAN?

ABSOLUTELY. YOU DON'T KNOW HER LIKE I DO. I JUST HOPE SHE EVENTUALLY FORGIVES ME, AFTER THE BATTLE.



OH, THERE YOU ARE. YOU DIDN'T ANSWER RIGHT AWAY, SO I THOUGHT I'D JUST POP IN AND SEE IF YOU WERE HOME.

PRINCE CHARMING? WHAT ARE YOU--?



I MUST SAY YOU'RE LOOKING EVEN *MORE* LOVELY THAN YOUR ALL-TOO-APPROPRIATE NAME BOASTS, BEAUTY.

SHALL WE GET STARTED? I DON'T WANT TO MISS SNOW'S BIG SPEECH.

STARTED ON WHAT?



DIDN'T BEAST TELL YOU YET? WE REACHED A MODEST *MONEY* DEAL FOR ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES OF YOUR CONSIDERABLE CHARMS.

YOU TWO NEED THE EXTRA INCOME...

...AND I ALWAYS LIKE A GOOD, LUSTY TUMBLE JUST BEFORE A FIGHT, SO--



**HE WHAT?!**

IT HELPS CALM ME.

**I'LL KILL HIM! I'M GOING TO--!**



**GET OUT! GET OUT, YOU FILTHY FILTH!**

I GUESS THAT DID THE TRICK, EH?

OH YES. I'M READY FOR WAR NOW.



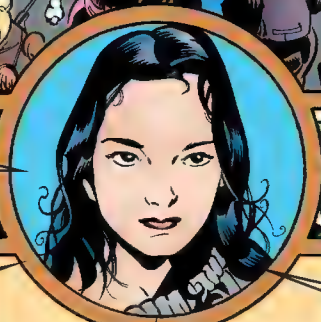
I'M NO MILITARY COMMANDER. I'VE NO SPECIAL WISDOM TO IMPART, EXCEPT THAT WHICH OTHERS HAVE SAID SO MANY TIMES BEFORE.

WE DON'T HAVE ANY PARTICULAR COUNTRY TO DEFEND.

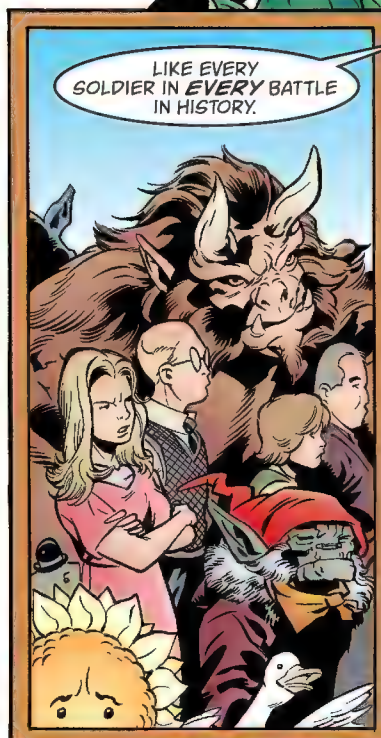
OURS WERE LOST TO US LONG AGO, AND WE'VE NO FLAG TO FIGHT FOR.

FABLETOWN HAS NO FORMAL STATUS, EXCEPT AS IT EXISTS IN OUR MINDS AND HEARTS.

NO, WHEN WE FIGHT TONIGHT, IF WE DO, IT WILL ONLY BE FOR EACH OTHER--FOR THOSE STANDING HERE BESIDE US.




CHEER UP, THOUGH.



LIKE EVERY SOLDIER IN EVERY BATTLE IN HISTORY.




ONCE THE BAD GUYS SEE THE STRENGTH OF OUR FORTIFICATIONS, DEFENSES AND, MOST IMPORTANT, OUR RESOLVE, THEY'LL PROBABLY JUST TURN TAIL AND RUN.



CHANCES ARE,  
AS SOON AS THEY SEE  
OUR NUMBERS, THE MEATHEADS  
WILL SIMPLY ROLL OVER AND  
SHOW THROAT.

ONCE THEY  
SURRENDER, WE  
MUST SHOW PROPER  
RESTRAINT AND NOT  
KILL *TOO* MANY  
OF THEM.



PERHAPS ONLY  
THOSE WHO HESITATE  
TO OBEY.


OR FAIL  
TO SHOW TOTAL  
DEFERENCE.



OR COWER  
AND CRINGE  
JUST A *BIT* TOO  
RELUCTANTLY.

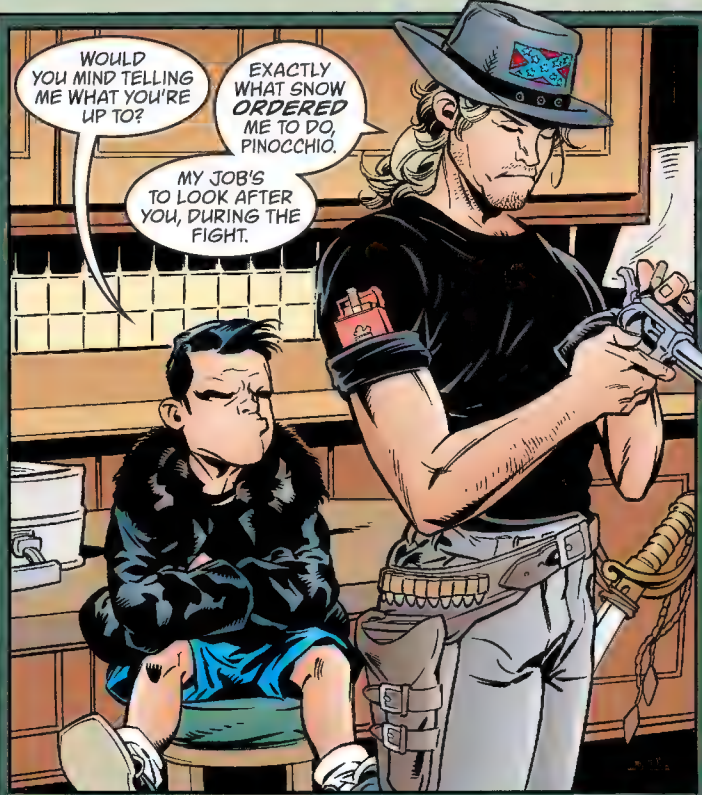


MY DEAR  
BROTHERS OF THE  
HOLY GROVE--WE'RE  
ABOUT TO EMBARK ON  
A *GLORIOUS* ADVENTURE,  
IN SERVICE TO  
THE EMPEROR.



FORM  
RANKS AND  
PREPARE TO  
MOVE  
*OUT!*

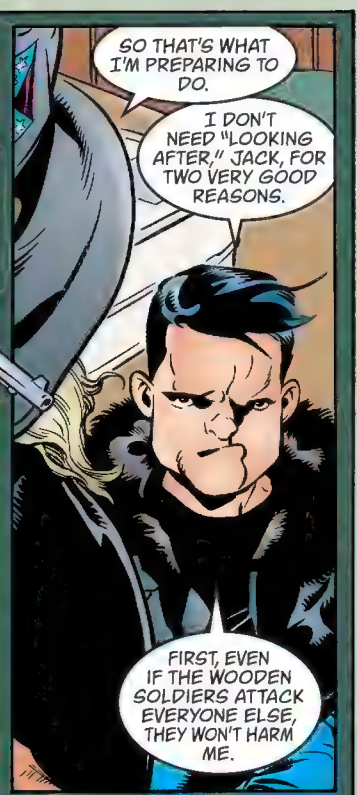




WOULD YOU MIND TELLING ME WHAT YOU'RE UP TO?

EXACTLY WHAT SNOW ORDERED ME TO DO, PINOCCHIO.

MY JOB'S TO LOOK AFTER YOU, DURING THE FIGHT.



SO THAT'S WHAT I'M PREPARING TO DO.

I DON'T NEED "LOOKING AFTER," JACK, FOR TWO VERY GOOD REASONS.

FIRST, EVEN IF THE WOODEN SOLDIERS ATTACK EVERYONE ELSE, THEY WON'T HARM ME.



DIDN'T YOU HEAR WHAT THEY SAID LAST NIGHT?

I'M THEIR EXTRA-SPECIAL SUPER-DELUXE **BIG BROTHER**.



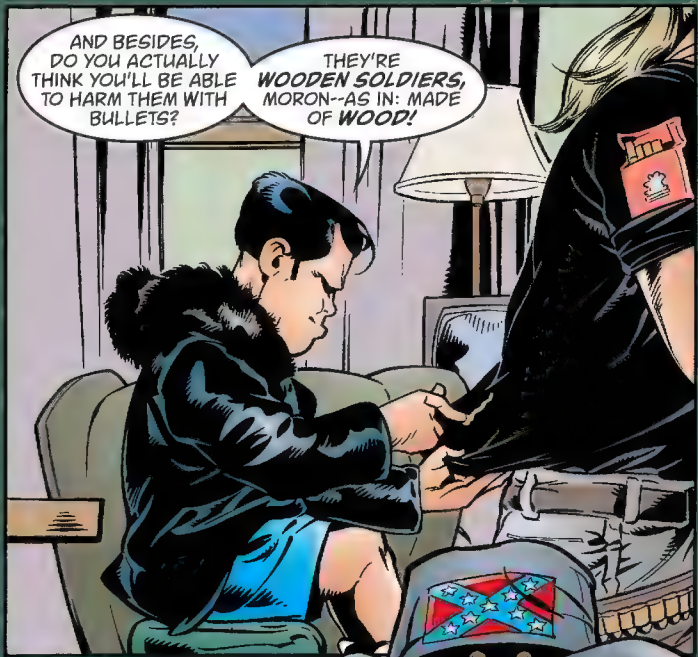
OKAY, NOT SO MUCH "BIG," BUT THEIR TREASURED **ELDER BROTHER**.

AND SECOND, WHEN THEY GIVE UP AND RUN AWAY, I PLAN TO VOLUNTARILY GO WITH THEM.



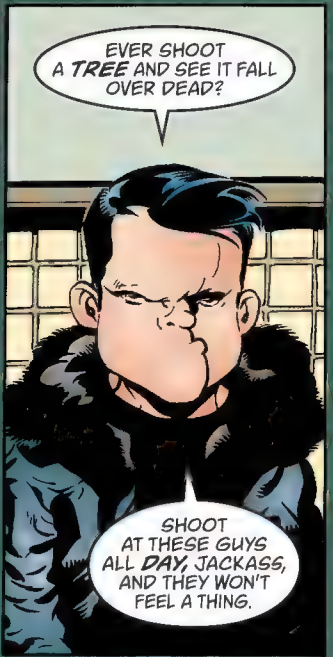
SOMEWHERE OVER THERE, THE ADVERSARY HAS MY DAD **PRISONER**, TURNING OUT WOODEN SOLDIERS FOR HIM.

ALL THIS TIME I THOUGHT GEPETTO WAS **DEAD**, BUT NOW WE CAN BE **REUNITED**.



AND BESIDES, DO YOU ACTUALLY THINK YOU'LL BE ABLE TO HARM THEM WITH BULLETS?

THEY'RE WOODEN SOLDIERS, MORON--AS IN: MADE OF WOOD!



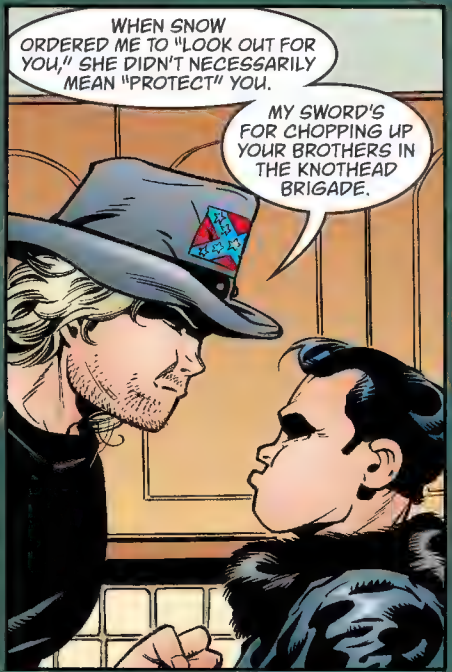
EVER SHOOT A TREE AND SEE IT FALL OVER DEAD?

SHOOT AT THESE GUYS ALL DAY, JACKASS, AND THEY WON'T FEEL A THING.



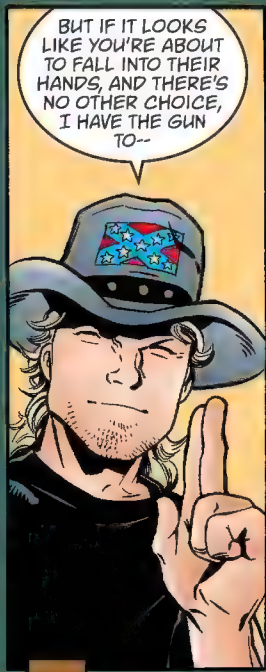
THINK YOU'VE GOT IT ALL FIGURED OUT, RUNT?

DO YOU HONESTLY IMAGINE THERE'S A CHANCE WE'D EVER LET YOU SKIP BACK TO THE HOMELANDS, TO SPILL YOUR GUTS TO THE ENEMY?



WHEN SNOW ORDERED ME TO "LOOK OUT FOR YOU," SHE DIDN'T NECESSARILY MEAN "PROTECT" YOU.

MY SWORD'S FOR CHOPPING UP YOUR BROTHERS IN THE KNOTHEAD BRIGADE.

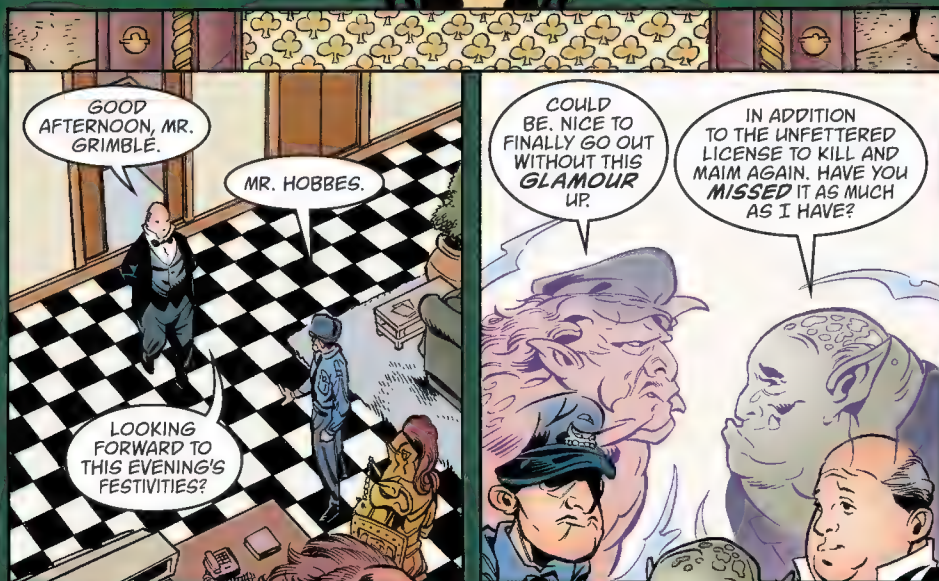


BUT IF IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE ABOUT TO FALL INTO THEIR HANDS, AND THERE'S NO OTHER CHOICE, I HAVE THE GUN TO--



KILL ME?

BULL'S-EYE.



GOOD AFTERNOON, MR. GRIMBLE.

MR. HOBBS.

LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS EVENING'S FESTIVITIES?

COULD BE. NICE TO FINALLY GO OUT WITHOUT THIS GLAMOUR UP.

IN ADDITION TO THE UNFETTERED LICENSE TO KILL AND MAIM AGAIN. HAVE YOU MISSED IT AS MUCH AS I HAVE?

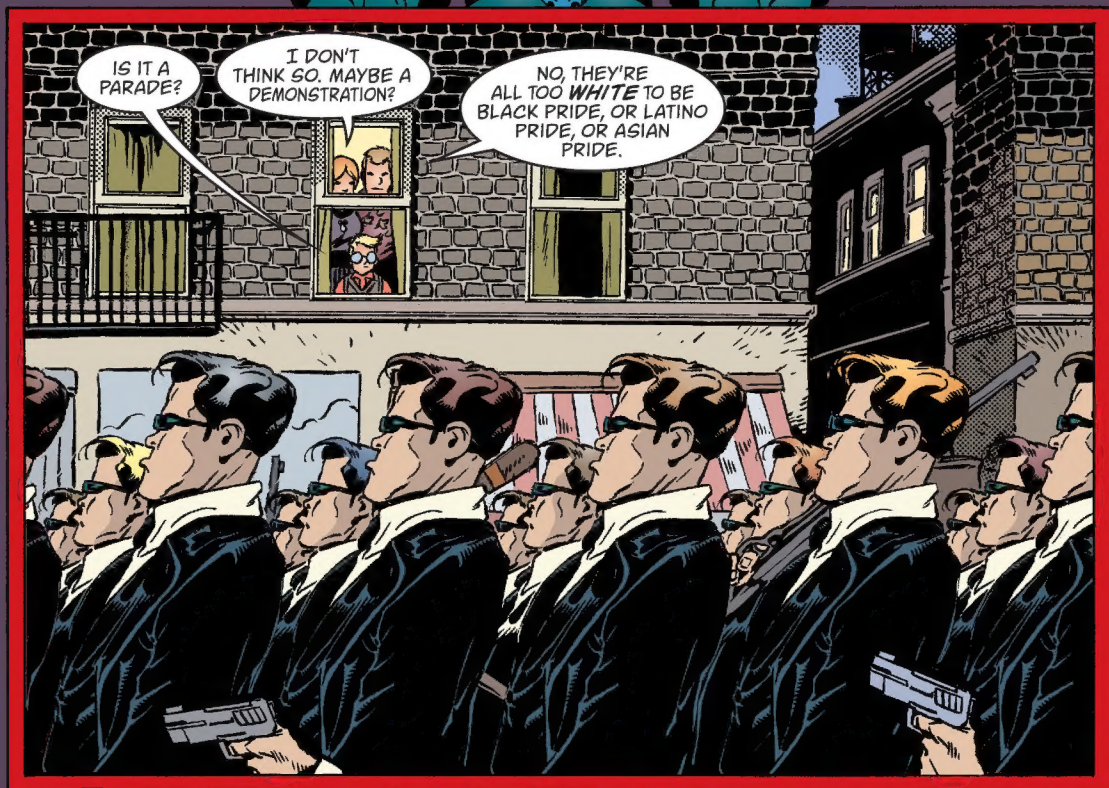
A BIT, MR. HOBBS. A BIT. CARE TO MAKE IT INTERESTING WITH A WAGER?

CAPITAL IDEA, MR. GRIMBLE. TROLL VERSUS GOBLIN. HOW SHALL WE SCORE IT?

MOST NUMBER OF HEADS COLLECTED WHEN IT'S ALL OVER SHOULD DO THE TRICK. LOSER BUYS DINNER?

AGREED.





IS IT A PARADE?

I DON'T THINK SO. MAYBE A DEMONSTRATION?

NO, THEY'RE ALL TOO *WHITE* TO BE BLACK PRIDE, OR LATINO PRIDE, OR ASIAN PRIDE.

THEY'RE ALL WELL-DRESSED. COULD THEY BE GAY PRIDE?  
I DOUBT IT. THEIR SUITS ARE WAY TOO CONSERVATIVE.

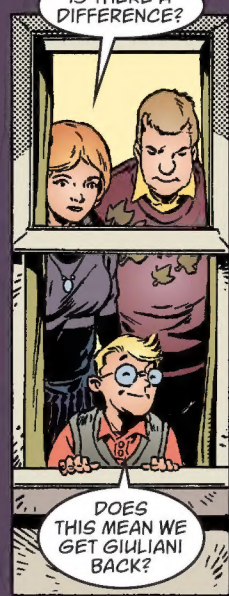
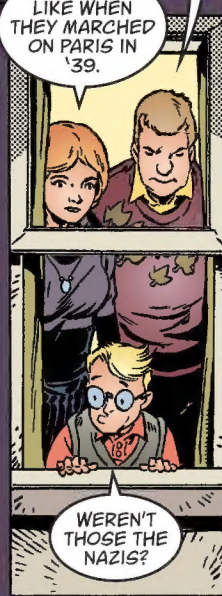
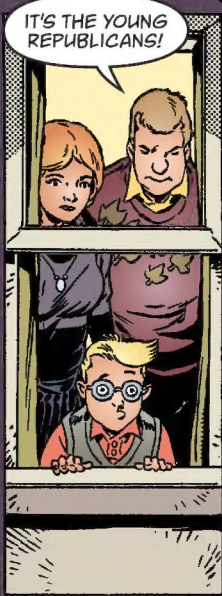
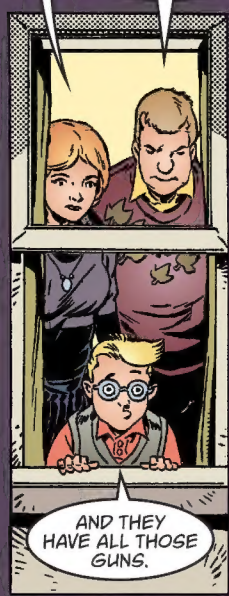
OH MY GOD! YOU'RE RIGHT!

IT FINALLY HAPPENED!

THEY'RE MARCHING IN-TAKING OVER NEW YORK!

JUST LIKE WHEN THEY MARCHED ON PARIS IN '39.

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?



AND THEY HAVE ALL THOSE GUNS.

IT'S THE YOUNG REPUBLICANS!

WEREN'T THOSE THE NAZIS?

DOES THIS MEAN WE GET GIULIANI BACK?



OH MY.



SOUND THE ALARM!

THEY'RE COMING!

THEY'RE COMING!



THE SOLDIERS ARE COMING!

HOW MANY?

HUNDREDS!

MAYBE THOUSANDS!

OH DEAR GOD.

**NEXT:**  
THE BATTLE OF FABLETOWN!

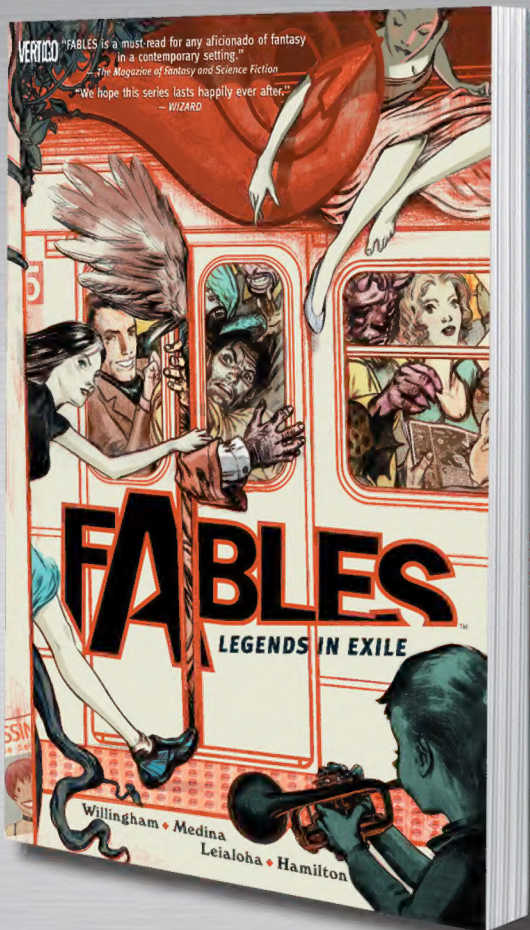
*"FABLES is an excellent series in the tradition of SANDMAN, one that rewards careful attention and loyalty."* – ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

# BILL WILLINGHAM

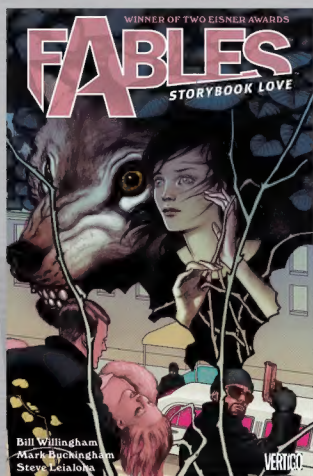
*"[A] wonderfully twisted concept... features fairy tale characters banished to the noirish world of present-day New York."*  
– THE WASHINGTON POST



- VOL. 1: LEGENDS IN EXILE
- VOL. 2: ANIMAL FARM
- VOL. 3: STORYBOOK LOVE
- VOL. 4: MARCH OF THE WOODEN SOLDIERS
- VOL. 5: THE MEAN SEASONS
- VOL. 6: HOMELANDS
- VOL. 7: ARABIAN NIGHTS (AND DAYS)
- VOL. 8: WOLVES
- VOL. 9: SONS OF EMPIRE
- VOL. 10: THE GOOD PRINCE
- VOL. 11: WAR AND PIECES
- VOL. 12: THE DARK AGES
- VOL. 13: THE GREAT FABLES CROSSOVER
- 1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



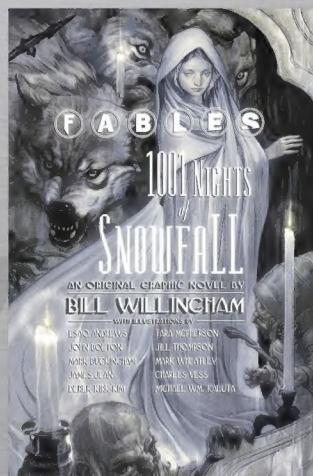
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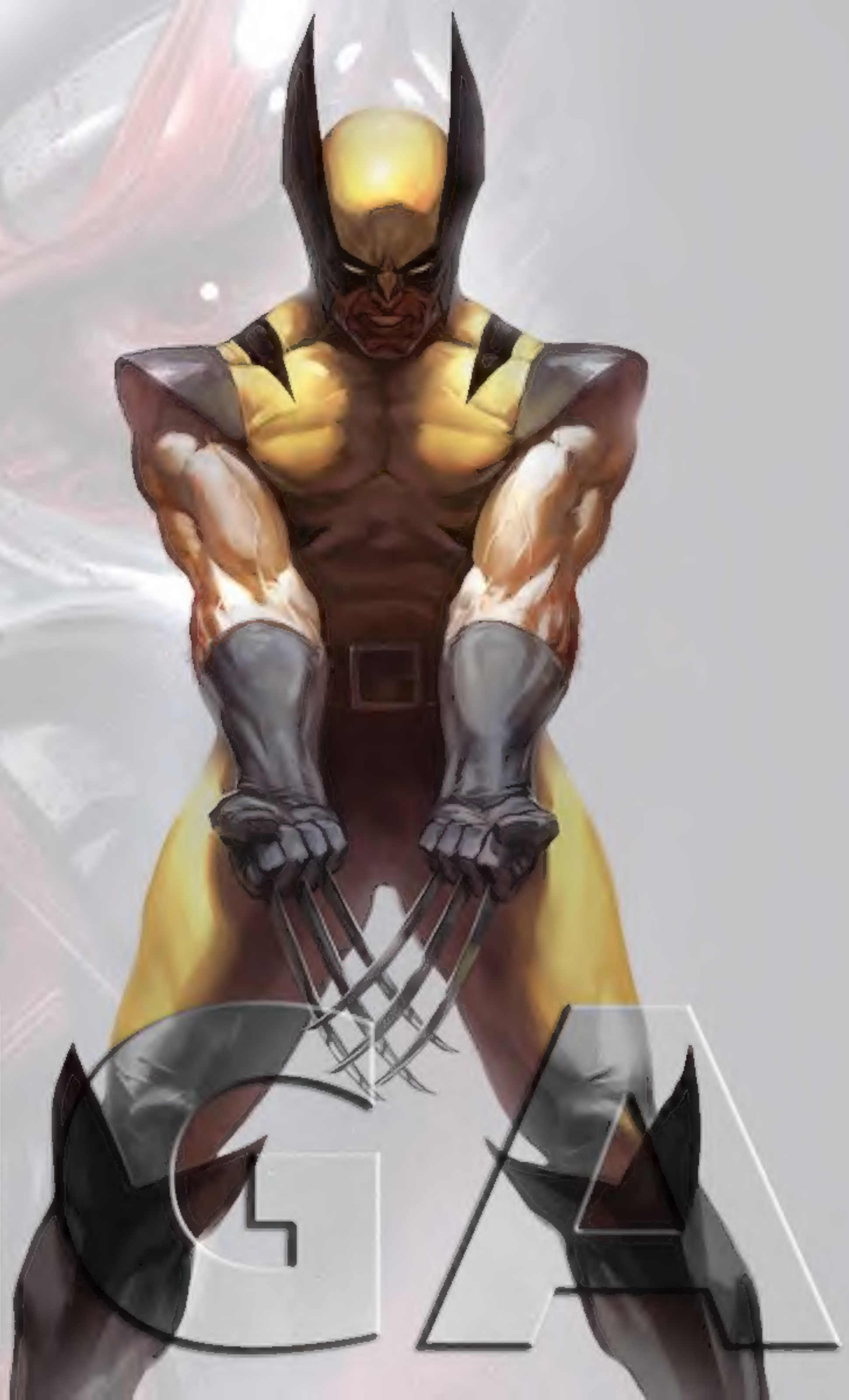


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